New Course Request

Indiana University

Indianapolis Campus

Check Appropriate Boxes: Undergraduate credit [X] Graduate credit [ ] Professional credit [ ]

1. School/Division: School of Liberal Arts
2. Academic Subject Code: REL
3. Course Number: R 386 (must be cleared with University Enrollment Services)
4. Instructor: David Craig
5. Course Title: Ethics of Consumption
   Recommended Abbreviation (Optional)
   (Limited to 32 Characters including spaces)
6. First time this course is to be offered (Semester/Year): Spring 2008
7. Credit Hours: Fixed at ___3___ or Variable from ___ ___ to ___ ___
8. Is this course to be graded S-F (only)? Yes [ ] No [X]
9. Is variable title approval being requested? Yes [ ] No [X]
10. Course description (not to exceed 50 words) for Bulletin publication:
    What is good consumption? Do consumers have moral duties? Combining the ethical perspectives of religion and philosophy with the empirical realities of economics and public policy, this course examines the social and environmental costs of consumption while valuing individual tastes and economic incentives. Course fulfills junior-senior integrator requirement.
11. Lecture Contact Hours: Fixed at ____3____ or Variable from _______ to _______
12. Non-Lecture Contact Hours: Fixed at ___0____ or Variable from __________ to __________
13. Estimated enrollment: 35, of which 0 percent are expected to be graduate students.
14. Frequency of scheduling: once per. Will this course be required for majors? no
15. Justification for new course: 2 years. See addenda
16. Are the necessary reading materials currently available in the appropriate library? yes
17. Please append a complete outline of the proposed course, and indicate instructor (if known), textbooks, and other materials. Syllabus attached
18. If this course overlaps with existing courses, please explain with which courses it overlaps and whether this overlap is necessary, desirable, or unimportant. See addenda
19. A copy of every new course proposal must be submitted to departments, schools, or divisions in which there may be overlap of the new course with existing courses or areas of strong concern, with instructions that they send comments directly to the originating Curriculum Committee. Please append a list of departments, schools, or divisions thus consulted. See addenda

Submitted by:

Department Chair/Division Director

Date 01/10/06

Approved by:

Dean

Date 11/1-06

Chancellor/Vice-President

Date

SLA Undergrad Curr & Standards Comm Chair

Date 10/31/06

University Enrollment Services

After School/Division approval, forward the last copy (without attachments) to University Enrollment Services for initial processing, and the remaining four copies and attachments to the Campus Chancellor or Vice-President.

UPS 724

University Enrollment Services Final—White; Chancellor/Vice-President—Blue; School/Division—Yellow; Department/Division—Pink; University Enrollment Services Advance—White
Addenda to New Course Request: R386 “Ethics of Consumption”
Prof. David Craig, Religious Studies, SLA, IUPUI
August 9, 2006

10. Course Description: What is good consumption? Do consumers have moral duties? Combining the ethical perspectives of religion and philosophy with the empirical realities of economics and public policy, this course examines the social and environmental costs of consumption while valuing individual tastes and economic incentives. Course fulfills junior-senior integrator requirement.

15. Justification: This course fulfills the junior-senior requirement in the IU School of Liberal Arts at IUPUI. It also enhances the ethics curriculum in the Religious Studies Department, adding economic and environmental themes not previously taught.

18. Course Overlap: At IUPUI, certain themes in this new course overlap with P340: Environmental Ethics and E340: Modern Material Culture. I have consulted with Michael Burke (Chair of Philosophy) and Paul Mullins (Chair of Anthropology) to ensure that this overlap is minor. By contrast with P340, the new course addresses more than environmental issues. As Mullins’ e-mail notes, my focus on moral questions about consumption distinguishes the new course from E340. See attachments for correspondence with Burke, Mullins and Robert Sandy (Chair of Economics) who all give their approval. In developing this new course, I also consulted with Greg Lindsey (Associate Dean, SPEA) to ensure that there wasn’t overlap with current courses in public and environmental affairs. Notes from our meeting are also attached.

In the wider IU system, a review of courses in Departments of Religious Studies, Philosophy and Anthropology found two courses with potential overlap with this new course: E618 Globalization and Consumer Culture (IU-B Anthropology) and R371: “Religion, Ethics, and the Environment” (IU-B Religious Studies). Rick Wilk sees little overlap with E618 or his freshman course, E104: Global Consumer Culture. Lisa Sideris likewise sees almost no overlap with R371. See attachments for correspondence with Wilk and Sideris.

19. Consulations: In developing this course, I consulted with the IUPUI Departments of Anthropology, Economics and Philosophy and with the School of Public and Environmental Affairs. I also consulted with faculty in Anthropology and Religious Studies at IU-B after a review of course listings in Departments of Anthropology, Philosophy and Religious Studies at all IU campuses found only two courses with potential overlap with this new course.
SYLLABUS

R300: Studies in Religion:
The Ethics of Consumption

Junior/Senior Integrator

Spring 2006

David Craig, Cavanaugh Hall 335A, 274-3689, davcraig@iupui.edu
Office hours: Monday 9:00-10:30, Wednesday 12:30-3:00, and by appointment

Course Description
This course asks, how, if at all, might we develop and practice an ethics of consumption today? This question reflects a central tension in American life between respect for individual liberties and concern for the common good. On the one hand, we tend to think that individual preferences should be respected, especially in economic life. Not only should consumers be allowed to buy as they choose and express their tastes, but our economic prosperity increasingly depends on this consumer spending. On the other hand, we also recognize that our common interests involve more than just a booming economy and may even be threatened by growing rates of consumption. The world’s resources, nature’s beauty, good jobs, public spaces and cultural diversity are just some of the shared goods that require our mutual concern and, perhaps, changed buying patterns. This course approaches that tension as an opportunity for historical reflection, critical analysis and moral imagination. Course readings will combine the ethical perspectives of religion and philosophy with the empirical realities and practical methods of economics and public policy. Students will integrate these disciplines in writing an issues paper and a research paper of their own design. The aim is to arrive at some reasonable goals and concrete steps toward the implementation of an ethics of consumption.

Course Objectives
- Students will sharpen their abilities to reason and write persuasively about ethical, economic and public policy issues
- Students will examine how the issues of human well-being, the common good and environmental health are debated today as compared to the Victorian period
- Students will understand how the disciplinary perspectives of religious and philosophical ethics, economics and public policy raise different questions and issues about “good consumption”
- Students will evaluate these issues for their ethical, economic, political and cultural factors and for their effects both here in America and abroad
- Students will devise a research project in which they apply different disciplinary tools, first, to define the research questions and practical issues related to a topic of their choosing and, then, to address these questions and issues in a final paper that recommends specific action(s)

Summary of Course Requirements
- Consistent attendance and informed participation, including 5 sets of Discussion Questions/Comments on the dates assigned to your group (see Good Discussions at end of syllabus): 10%
- 5 page Argument Paper for Mill or Ruskin, due Feb. 6: 20%
- *5 page Issues Paper on a topic of your choice, topic due Feb. 27 and paper due Mar. 22: 15%
- *10-12 page Research/Action Paper on a topic of your choice, prospectus due Mar. 27 and paper due Apr. 26: 35%
- Take home Final Exam, due Friday, May 5, 4pm: 20%
Honors Option
Students enrolled in the Honors program may take this course as an Honors option. Requirements are the same as above, with the following modifications:

- In addition to attending, participating and submitting 5 sets of Discussion Questions/Comments, Honors students will: a) attend two extra sessions outside of class: at the end the week of Jan. 30 to discuss the materials in Part One, and during the week of April 17 to give a presentation on research projects, and b) co-lead, with another Honors student, one class session on the syllabus. Collectively these requirements will be weighted: 15%
- Note: no changes to the Argument Paper (same due dates and weighting): 20%
- 5 page Issues Paper (same due dates and procedures): 15%
- In lieu of the Final Exam, Honors students may write a 20-page Research/Action paper (same due dates), provided that they confirm in writing that they will deliver a revised research paper at a public forum for student research, such as the IUPUI Undergraduate Research Conference. If an Honors student chooses this option, the Research/Action Paper will be weighted: 50% (if not the Research/Action Paper will be 30%, and the Final Exam will be 20%, the same as above)

Grading Scale
I will use the Oncourse gradebook to calculate grades. I will give a numerical score for each assignment, and these scores will be weighted as indicated above. The final grade will be based on this grading scale:

A = 100-93%; A- = 92-90%; B+ = 89-87%; B = 86-83%; B- = 82-80%; C+ = 79-77%; C = 76-73%; C- = 72-70%; D+ = 69-67%; D = 66-63%; D- = 62-60%; F = 59% or below

Goals of an Integrator Course
This course fulfills the Integrator requirement for students in the School of Liberal Arts and the School of Science. As a result, students must have junior or senior standing to enroll, and the expectation is that they will have completed most of their introductory general education courses. This course is writing-intensive, so students must have completed the English W131 and W132 requirements. The primary purpose of an Integrator lies in its name—to serve as the occasion for students to integrate and apply diverse disciplinary perspectives, including those of their major and the other disciplines covered in the course—in this case, religious ethics, philosophical ethics, economics and public policy. Course readings and assignments are structured to introduce concepts and methods in each of these disciplines. Students are required to integrate at least two disciplines—one from the humanities and one from the social sciences (or the natural sciences, with instructor’s approval)—in their Issues Paper and Research/Action Paper. The goal of this two-step paper process is to explore the questions and issues raised by different disciplines in the Issues Paper before arguing for specific conclusions in the Research/Action Paper.

Attendance, Participation and Discussion Questions/Comments
I expect you to attend every class. Unless you can document a medical emergency—something on the scale of a mental breakdown or an unexpected surgery—I count all absences, excused or unexcused. If you miss more than five classes, I will lower your participation grade one grade-level (e.g., a B+ becomes a C+). If you miss many more than five, the participation grade will drop more. The participation grade is based half on the required Discussion Questions/Comments (50 points) and half on the quality of your in-class contributions—asking questions, directing us to passages, responding to other students, making useful connections (50 points). For a fuller explanation of these requirements, see Good Discussions at the end of the syllabus. I accept Discussion Questions/Comments only if I receive them by noon on the days assigned to your group. I give half credit if you don’t attend class that day.

Written Work, Due Dates and Final Exam
Written work must be typed and double-spaced, with legible fonts and reasonable margins. On formal papers I give extensions only in emergencies, and I expect you talk to me in advance of the due date.
Late papers (i.e., those handed in beyond the due date or the extension date) will be marked down 1/6th of a grade per business day. It is your responsibility to save copies of your written work. You must get confirmation that I have received any e-mailed papers; otherwise they will be considered late. To pass this course, you must turn in and receive a grade on all of the formal papers and the final exam.

**Plagiarism and the Web**

Plagiarism is the use of another person’s words, ideas, etc., without attribution. So whenever you take words from or whenever your ideas or expressions have been shaped by another author or source (other than me), you must reference these borrowings and contributions. Today the most common abuses of this rule involve the worldwide web. The quality of the information on the web is uneven; much of it is dated, anecdotal or biased, and this is especially true when dealing with personal issues like consumption. For this reason, when you consult materials on the web, you are responsible for evaluating its quality (see: [http://www.ulib.iupui.edu/genref/internet.html](http://www.ulib.iupui.edu/genref/internet.html)). Relying on flawed information may lower your grade. You must also give citations for every website you use in anyway. If, on papers, you fail to cite your sources, whether you use page references for books or URL’s for websites, I will return your paper without a grade. To get a grade on the paper, you will have to add the necessary references. I may also use the anti-plagiarism software “Turnitin.com” to guarantee that the work in your paper is all your own. Plagiarism is the chief offense in academic writing, and a finding of plagiarism will result in an “F” for the course and notification of the appropriate authorities (see Code of Student Rights, Responsibilities and Conduct: [http://dsa.indiana.edu/Code/index1.html](http://dsa.indiana.edu/Code/index1.html)).

**Adaptive Education Services**

For students who require particular types of accommodation and assistance, please contact IUPUI’s Adaptive Education Services (AES). You can learn more about AES by visiting its home page, [http://life.iupui.edu/aes/index.asp](http://life.iupui.edu/aes/index.asp). You can contact AES by phone, 274-3241 (voice) or 278-2050 (TDD/TTY), and e-mail, aes@iupui.edu.

**Required Texts**

David A. Crocker and Toby Linden, eds., *The Ethics of Consumption* (Rowman & Littlefield, 1999)


John Ruskin, *Unto this Last and Other Writings* (Penguin, 1985)

**Schedule of Topics, Readings and Assignments**

A and B = assigned dates for students in groups A and B to submit discussion questions/comments

JSTOR = use JSTOR database (available through the University Library homepage) to find article

OnC = Oncourse (under Schedule tab)

REC = recommended reading

**Part One: Ethics and Consumption in Victorian Britain**

Jan. 9       Introductory Session

Jan. 11      A Vision of Good Consumption

Jan. 16      No Class – M.L.King, Jr. Day

Jan. 18      Liberty and Individuality
             Mill, *On Liberty*, pp. 3-16, 57-76
Jan. 23 (A) Liberty and Consumption  
Mill, *On Liberty*, pp. 77-119

Jan. 25 (B) Criticizing *Homo Economicus*  
Ruskin, *Unto this Last*, pp. 161-189

Jan. 30 (A) Just Prices and True Values?  
Ruskin, *Unto this Last*, pp. 190-228

Feb. 1 (B) Utility and Justice  
Mill, *Utilitarianism*, pp. 233-245, 269-301

**Part Two: Economics and Public Policy: Realities and Methods**

Feb. 6 Consumer Sovereignty: The Case of Smoking  
Frank, chaps. 1 and 4 (skim 2 and 3)

*Feb. 8 (A) Does Money Buy Happiness?  
Frank, chaps. 5, 6 and 11 (skim 10)

*Feb. 13 Efficiency and Equity  
Frank, chaps. 12 through 15
Okun, “Equality and Efficiency” (handout)
Guest Speaker, Marc Bilodeau, Economics Dept., IUPUI  
**Due:** 5 page Argument Paper

Feb. 15 (B) Factoring in Public Policy: The Carbon Tax  
Pearce, “Role of Carbon Taxes in Adjusting to Global Warming,” *Economic Journal* (JSTOR)
For updated discussion, see: *Global Policy Forum* on the carbon tax (an excellent site for research ideas, especially under “Social/Economic Policy”)

*Feb. 20 (A) Case Study: Sweatshops  
Wight, ed., “What Should We Think about Sweatshops?” (OnC)

*Feb. 22 Putting a Public Value on Recycling  
Haith, “Materials Balance for Municipal Solid-Waste Management”
Guest Speakers, Margie Smith-Simmons and Lisa Laflin, Indy Dept. of Public Works

**Part Three: Limits, Needs and Other Basic “Facts”**

*Feb. 27 (B) “Just the Facts, Please”  
*Ethics of Consumption*, chap. 1
Solow, “Is the End of the World at Hand?” (handout)
REC: Frank, chap. 7  
**Due:** Topic for Issues Paper
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Group</th>
<th>Topic</th>
<th>Source(s)</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Mar. 1</td>
<td>(A)</td>
<td>Are There Limits to Consumption?</td>
<td><em>Ethics of Consumption</em>, chaps. 2 through 4</td>
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<td>Mar. 6</td>
<td>(B)</td>
<td>Meat and Potatoes Ethics and Economics</td>
<td><em>Ethics of Consumption</em>, chaps. 5 and 6</td>
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<td>Mar. 8</td>
<td>(A)</td>
<td>Limits to Growth/Limits to Freedom?</td>
<td><em>Ethics of Consumption</em>, chaps. 7 and 8</td>
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<td>Mar. 13-17</td>
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<td>No Classes – Spring Break (whew!)</td>
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<td>Mar. 20</td>
<td>(B)</td>
<td>Defining Human Needs</td>
<td><em>Ethics of Consumption</em>, chaps. 10 and 11</td>
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<td>*Mar. 22</td>
<td></td>
<td>Capabilities and Living Well!</td>
<td><em>Ethics of Consumption</em>, chap. 16</td>
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<td>REC: Frank, chap. 8-9</td>
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<td>*Mar. 27</td>
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<td>Liberty and the Good Life</td>
<td><em>Ethics of Consumption</em>, chaps. 17-18</td>
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<td><strong>Due:</strong> 5-page Issues Paper</td>
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<td>Part Four: The Global Economy: Toward a Just and Sustainable World?</td>
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<td>*Mar. 29</td>
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<td>Measuring Global Inequities</td>
<td><em>Ethics of Consumption</em>, chaps. 23</td>
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<td><strong>Due:</strong> Prospectus if you have changed topics</td>
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<td>Apr. 3</td>
<td>(A)</td>
<td>Responsibilities of the Rich?</td>
<td><em>Ethics of Consumption</em>, chaps. 24 through 26</td>
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<td>Apr. 5</td>
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<td>The Real Price of Oil</td>
<td>Readings from: <a href="http://www.bebor.org/">http://www.bebor.org/</a> (look under section on The Ogoni)</td>
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<td>Guest Speaker, Scott Pegg, Political Science Dept, IUPUI</td>
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<td>Apr. 10</td>
<td>(B)</td>
<td>Reading(s) and Topic TBA</td>
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<td>Part Five: Consumption, Culture and Religion</td>
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<td>Apr. 12</td>
<td>(A)</td>
<td>The Joys of Shopping</td>
<td><em>Ethics of Consumption</em>, chaps. 9 and 13</td>
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<td>Apr. 17</td>
<td>(B)</td>
<td>The Need for Self-expression and Sociality</td>
<td><em>Ethics of Consumption</em>, chaps. 14 and 15</td>
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<td>Apr. 19</td>
<td>(A)</td>
<td>Jewish and Catholic Perspectives</td>
<td><em>Ethics of Consumption</em>, chaps. 20 and 21</td>
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<td>Apr. 24</td>
<td>(B)</td>
<td>The Virtue of Frugality</td>
<td><em>Ethics of Consumption</em>, chap. 22</td>
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Apr. 26  The Makings of an Ethics of Consumption
    Open discussion of students' research findings/conclusions
    **Due:** Research/Action Paper

May 1  Wrap-up and Review

May 5  Take home Final Exam, **due** 4pm, CA335A

**Good Discussions and Class Participation**
Integrator courses require students to synthesize different fields of study. This means you have to keep reflecting on the connections among the ideas, issues and approaches in the readings as they relate to the broader issues of consumption. Classes are a time for this ongoing reflection. For this reason student participation is vital to the success of the course, and here are some ground rules to improve discussions.

1. Classroom comments should direct us either to our course readings or to concrete examples that are based on more than personal experience, e.g., information from newspapers, other media or past courses are good sources; well-constructed anecdotes can be, too, but often they are not.
2. When discussing course readings, take us to a specific passage so that we’re all on the same page. Feel free to refer to earlier course readings, even if you cannot take us to a specific passage.
3. When discussing issues and examples from outside of class, give enough information so that we can all understand them and relate them to the day’s discussion.
4. Be respectful of each other’s contributions, being sure to listen to other students and to support or clarify their contributions by making relevant observations and connections or by raising critical objections and questions.

In short, simply spouting off about your opinions is unhelpful. That’s not to say that arguing for your views is to be avoided. The required Discussion Questions/Comments are meant to prepare you for class discussions so that you have more informed questions and comments to contribute.

**Requirements for Discussion Questions/Comments**
- **Five** times this semester you are to submit **two** questions/comments about the readings assigned for that day or about some outside research or example that relates to that day’s topic. **You can only submit on the days assigned to group (A or B).** You may submit extra sets of Discussion Questions/Comments on your group’s days, either to replace lower grades or to boost your class contributions grade if you are shy about speaking in class.
- In addition to the requirement that you submit only on your group’s day, DQ/C’s must be in my IUPUI account (davcaraig@iupui.edu) by noon on the day of that class. **If submissions are not on-time, or if you don’t attend class that day, a zero will be given—no exceptions.**
- I will grade DQ/C’s on a 10-point scale based on the following factors: depth of understanding of the readings, degree to which questions probe the readings, degree to which comments clarify key issues and passages, creativity of comments in outside research/examples, integration of materials from earlier in the course. Total grade is up to 50 points based on your five best submissions.
- **Good** DQ/C’s might seek to clarify a key term or difficult passage, challenge an author on some point, offer a counter-example or counter-argument, apply the author’s views to a specific case or develop or question the reading’s relevance. They must **include page references.** They are meant to be reflective, too, so don’t just send me the first ones that occur to you.
- I will read DQ/C’s before class and try to incorporate them in the day’s lecture or discussion. But as I cannot include everyone’s, feel free to add your questions and comments if I don’t.
Grading Class Contributions
At the mid-point and end of the semester, I will assign a class participation grade of up to 25 points each (submitting extra sets of DQ/C's can help raise your class contributions grade).

Note: if you miss more than five classes (without a documented medical emergency), then I will lower your class contributions grade by 10 points. I will lower it more if you miss many more than five classes.

Here is the scale I use in grading class contributions:

25-23 points: Student has done all reading in advance of class and typically comes to class with passages and questions to discuss. S/he introduces these passages and raises issues for other members to discuss. S/he also listens to contrary opinions and engages other students in a discussion of their ideas. In short, an “A” student participates in an exchange of ideas.

22-20 points: Student typically has completed all the reading assignments on time, but does not always come to class with passages and questions in mind. S/he waits for others to raise interesting issues. If the student contributes well but does not engage other students in a discussion of their ideas, then s/he falls in this range, too. In short, a “B” student may sometimes participate in an exchange of ideas but sometimes frustrates that exchange through silence or through a lack of interaction.

19-17 points: Student typically attends every class and listens attentively, but refuses to be drawn into discussion, even though s/he may have read the assignments in advance.

Less than 17 points: A student who receives a grade lower than “C” fails to bring readings to class and/or is consistently unprepared.
David,

I've conferred with three of my colleagues in philosophy about the integrator course you propose on the ethics of consumption. We all agree that the degree of overlap with our courses (and our discipline) is not excessive. The fields of philosophy and religious studies do overlap in some areas, such as ethics and Eastern thought, and we simply need to keep in touch and make reasonable accommodations. (Incidentally, because of your education, research, and publication in ethics, we're a lot happier to have ethics taught by you than by some *others* around campus!)

The course looks wonderful. I expect it to be one of the best integrators. Chris Kraatz, who teaches our course on environmental ethics, offers to suggest some ideas for your course, if you confer with him sometime.

Please include this message with your submissions to the curriculum committees.

Best wishes,
Michael Burke

Professor and Chair
Department of Philosophy
Indiana University-Purdue University Indianapolis
425 University Boulevard
Indianapolis, IN 46202

Office: 344B Cavanaugh Hall
Phone: (317) 274-3957
Home: (317) 638-1093
E-Mail: mburke@iupui.edu
FAX: (317) 278-4579
Subject: Re: Consumption Course
Date: Thursday, August 11, 2005 10:59 AM
From: paulmull@iupui.edu
To: David Craig <davcraig@iupui.edu>

David;
Your class will really focus on the broadly defined moral dimensions of consumption, so even though it is close to material I examine in Modern material Culture and Historical Archaeology your perspective is more complimentary than competing and would be a good class for my own students to take. I can forward something more official to the curriculum committee or on letterhead for you to include in the package if you'd like. I will be at Stanford in the Spring, so doing your class in the Spring works well for my students since I will not be teaching any classes here at all.

Paul

Quoting David Craig <davcraig@iupui.edu>:

> Paul:
> 
> As we've discussed before, I'm proposing a new integrator course with the variable subtitle, "The Ethics of Consumption," for spring 2006. Although I'll be using a few readings with an anthropological perspective (from the edited volume, The Ethics of Consumption, Crocker and Linden, eds.), the class focus will be the religious and philosophical perspectives of ethics and the empirical and practical perspectives of economics and public policy.
> 
> I'm writing now for two reasons: 1) I want to ensure that this course does not overlap with courses you teach, or with other related courses in the anthropology curriculum, and 2) I need to ask for written permission to go ahead and propose this course to the SLA Undergraduate Curriculum Committee and the Core Curriculum Committee. Although you're not the chair, you are the person best able, I believe, to address how my course might overlap with anthropology courses on consumption.
> 
> Please let me know if you have any questions or need more information.
> 
> Thanks,
> David Craig
> 
>

Paul R. Mullins
Associate Professor
Dept. of Anthropology
413B Cavanaugh Hall
Indiana University-Purdue University, Indianapolis
Indianapolis, IN 46202
317-274-9847
http://www.iupui.edu/~anthpm/home.html
Subject: Re: Integrator Course
Date: Wednesday, August 10, 2005 12:38 PM
From: Robert Sandy <icjz100@iupui.edu>
To: David Craig <davcraig@iupui.edu>

Dear David:

If either Marc or Rich are willing to give the guest lectures without payment or course releases then I will sign if I am asked to sign the form as an "involved" department.

There is a lot of discussion in economics about the public welfare consequences of private consumption decisions. The idea of external costs imposed on society by private consumption decisions is first discussed in the introductory microeconomics course. The solutions are usually a tax or subsidy to align the private and public interests. Air pollution caused by private decisions to buy gas are a traditional example. The advanced course were externalities get the most discussion is Marc Bilodeau's public finance class, e308 but the concept shows up in many classes.

Regards,
Bob S.

On Aug 10, 2005, at 12:05 PM, David Craig wrote:

> Dear Bob:
> > Over the course of the summer, I've met with Marc Bilodeau and Rich
> > Steinberg (and had e-mail exchanges with Mark Wilhelm) to discuss
> > ideas for
> > an integrator course I'm proposing on "The Ethics of Consumption."
> > Here is
> > the course description as it stands:
> >
> > "This course explores the question, how, if at all, might we develop
> > and
> > practice an ethics of consumption today? This question reflects a
> > central
> > tension in American life between respect for individual liberty and
> > concern
> > for the common good. On the one hand, we tend to think that individual
> > preferences should be respected, especially in economic life. Not only
> > should consumers be allowed to buy as they choose and express their
> > tastes,
> > but our economic prosperity increasingly depends on this consumer
> > spending.
> > On the other hand, we also recognize that our common interests involve
> > more
> > than a booming economy and may even be threatened by growing rates of
> > consumption. The world's resources, nature's beauty, good jobs, public
> > spaces and cultural diversity are just some of the shared goods that
> > require
> > our mutual concern and perhaps changed buying patterns. This course
> > approaches that tension as an opportunity for historical reflection,
> > critical analysis and moral imagination. Course readings will combine
> > the
> > ethical perspectives of religion and philosophy with the empirical
> > realities
Meeting with Greg Lindsey, SPEA (6/1/05)

We discussed the contributions that environmental science and public policy could make to a course on “The Ethics of Consumption.” The meeting was useful in highlighting the limitations of a course that tackles the issue of consumption as a strictly “ethical” matter abstracted from the legal, political and economic realities of American life and the regulatory environment that already exists. Prof. Lindsey provided valuable guidance in helping me think through the feasibility and outcomes of student-designed projects.

Prof. Lindsey shared two textbooks on Environmental Science and Landscape Planning that include discussions of the history and ethics of these topics. He also indicated how environmental laws and regulations can be read for different value schemes: 1) species have “intrinsic value” in the “Endangered Species Act,” 2) all factors must be balanced in the Clean Water Act and 3) the most sensitive person is the benchmark in the “Clean Air Act.” He also suggested the “Taking Sides” series as a possible source of good debates about these and related issues.

Prof. Lindsey raised questions about my proposed group project advising the City of Indianapolis on its recycling program. I was attracted to the problem of Indy’s recycling program because making it successful would require a range of efforts that draw on a different disciplinary perspectives: studying the current program’s economic feasibility, learning about alternative waste streams, publicizing the program to residents, generating active community support, etc.

David: my concern with the project as you described it would be that it would be very difficult for the students, given their skill levels, to provide results back to the city that would actually help them solve their problems. I responded this way because your initial description said that the students would “advise” the city, and I have doubts about their ability to advise on this particular project. That is, I’m not sure they could provide much value added, and I didn’t want the city staff to think that they were going to get answers. The “intellectual exercise of understanding the problem will be useful, especially if the city staff set the stage. The issue concerned matching the projects with skill levels and then also managing expectations of city staff. Staff will be happy to address students (at least in my experience), but if we ask them to invest more time than a lecture and increase expectations, then we want to make sure we can deliver. Prof. Lindsey’s questions convinced me: 1) that so large a project is unworkable within the constraints of a semester-long undergraduate course, and 2) that students’ time is better spent on projects that issue in concrete results than in just the intellectual exercise of understanding of the difficult trade-offs in public policy efforts and social change. He noted that students can survey people, ask questions and formulate change strategies, and he proposed several more narrowly-tailored problems, including:

- putting warnings on storm drains against the disposal of oil and other hazmats (I’m not sure who has responsibility for this now at the Dept. of Public Works);
- reducing the presence of mercury in stores, dentists’ offices and homes (John Chavez, Department of Public Works);
- improving the disposal of hazardous materials through proper channels
• studying attitudes toward lead paint that make it harder to reduce exposure (IKE: Improving Kids’ Environment) (Janet McCabe is the new director of IKE)
• conducting environmental audits of the IUPUI campus following the National Wildlife Federation’s model
• studying non-source pollution from lawn fertilizers
• investigating the hazards of lawn care in general
• Another item would be to assist the stewardship manager with Indy Parks on volunteer removal of invasive exotic vegetation (e.g., amur honeysuckle, garlic mustard, etc.) This issue is this: Indy Parks recruits volunteers to remove exotic vegetation. It does this to restore native landscapes, which are more “natural.” This raises the issue of whether native landscapes have more intrinsic value, and the management question of whether it makes sense to recruit volunteers to engage in this very labor intensive activity. Don Miller is the Indy Parks Person who manages stewardship programs.

ARE THERE OTHER SUGGESTED ISSUES THAT OCCUR TO YOU?

Finally, Prof. Lindsey made the good suggestion of inviting City officials in to discuss the challenges, benefits and limits of recycling problems, the creation and maintenance of public spaces, the politics and economics of sustainable development projects and other city-wide initiatives.

In structuring the syllabus, I am now planning two several-week sections with the themes of “Public Policy Challenges: Valuation, Information, Education and Resources” and “Economic Realities: Preferences, Trade-offs, Markets and Growth.” The themes in the public policy section concern the challenges of deciding how to value resources, species and public goods; of getting accurate information out to people; of educating people to change behavior; and of marshalling the necessary resources, human, financial and organizational, to achieve policy goals. The themes in the economics section concern the importance of respecting individuals’ preferences; of appreciating complex trade-offs; of understanding the limits and the benefits of market-solutions to problems; and of recognizing the extent to which economic growth fuels material prosperity, social benefits, human development and other non-economic values.

After a search through the Taking Sides titles, this one seems the most relevant:
Subject: Re: Course Overlap
Date: Tuesday, August 8, 2006 4:27 PM
From: Richard Wilk <wilkr@indiana.edu>
To: David Craig <davcraigh@iupui.edu>
Conversation: Course Overlap

David

I don't think there is very much overlap at all. There is in fact more overlap with my topics freshman course, E104 Global Consumer Culture, because I spend a lot of time in that course on ethics, and on getting students to think about the environmental implications of their own consumption. But I doubt if I spend more than a quarter of the course on the issue. So as far as I am concerned you should go ahead. In fact I am delighted to hear that there is such a course at IUPUI. I have been trying to get a group of faculty together to discuss ways to make our teaching about consumption and consumer culture more systematic and rigorous. I had a lot of support from our now-departed dean, and I guess I will have to wait for the new dean to get hired and oriented.

By the way, do you know Vincent Miller's book Consuming Religion: Christian Faith and Practice in a Consumer Culture <http://www.amazon.com/gp/product/0826415318/sr=1-1/qid=1155068450/ref=pd_bbs_1/102-3679629-5129734?ie=UTF8&s=books> ? He is one of the few people writing from an ethical perspective who has really taken the time to read contemporary theories of consumer culture. I am also a big fan of Daniel Horowitz' work on the history of consumption moralizing in the US.

Best regards,

Rick Wilk

David Craig wrote:
> Dear Richard Wilk:
> >
> > I am a professor of religious ethics at IUPUI. I am starting the process of requesting a permanent course number for an ethics course I have taught once in spring 2006. One of the parts of the petition process is to ensure that there isn't too much "overlap" with other courses being taught in the IU system. Your E618 course on "Globalization and Consumer Culture" bears a distant resemblance to my course, tentatively entitled, "The Ethics of Consumption." In developing this course, I consulted with Paul Mullins in the anthropology department at IUPUI. He felt my course, with its focus on ethics, differed considerably from the courses he teaches on consumer and material culture. I'm sending you a copy of my syllabus in hopes that you can let me know if you think there's considerable "overlap" with the course you teach.
> >
> > I am working on a deadline of Aug. 18, so I hope that you can give me a speedy response.
> >
> > Many thanks,
> >
> > David Craig
> >
> > Religious Studies, IUPUI
> > 317-274-3689
Subject: RE: Course Overlap

Date: Wednesday, August 9, 2006 10:37 AM
From: Sideris, Lisa H <lsideris@indiana.edu>
To: "Craig, David" <davcraig@iupui.edu>

Conversation: Course Overlap

Hi,
I don't think there is much overlap at all here. It looks like a very interesting course though.
Good luck with it.
Lisa

__________________________________________________________

From: Craig, David
Sent: Tue 08/08/2006 14:37
To: Sideris, Lisa H
Subject: Course Overlap

Dear Dr. Sideris:

Hi, I am a professor of religious ethics at IUPUI. I've been down to the Poynter Center a few times in the past few years, and I know Rich Miller and have met Aaron Stalnaker. I hope to meet you, too, sometime soon.

I'm writing you now because I am starting the process of requesting a permanent course number for an ethics course I have taught once in spring 2006. One of the parts of the petition process is to ensure that there isn't too much "overlap" with other courses being taught in the IU system. Your R371 course on "Religion, Ethics and the Environment" bears a distant resemblance to my course, currently titled "The Ethics of Consumption." I'm sending you a copy of my syllabus in hopes that you can let me know if you think there's considerable "overlap" with the course you teach.

I am working on a deadline of Aug. 18, so I hope that you can give me a speedy response.

Many thanks,
David Craig

Religious Studies, IUPUI
317-274-3689